

Three Blessings of the Heavenly Charter

by C.H. Spurgeon

C.H. Spurgeon exhorts believers to gratefully recognize and praise God for the threefold blessings of life, divine favor, and spiritual preservation as a foundation for faith and hope.

Scripture: Job 10:12, Psalm 23:6, Psalm 90:10, John 10:10, Romans 6:23

Topics: "Gratitude", "Divine Favor", "Spiritual Life"

Description

In this devotional sermon, C.H. Spurgeon invites listeners to reflect on the abundant blessings granted by God, focusing on life, divine favor, and spiritual preservation. He challenges believers to cultivate a heart of gratitude even in trials and encourages the spiritually dead to seek new life in Christ. Through vivid illustrations and biblical truths, Spurgeon reminds all of the majesty of God's mercy and the importance of continual praise. This message is a timeless call to recognize and celebrate the heavenly charter of God's grace.

Transcript

"You have granted me life and favor, and Your visitation has preserved my spirit." Job 10:12.

IT is well, sometimes, to sit down and take a grateful review of all that God has done for us, and with us, from our first day until now. We must not be like hogs under the oak, that eat the acorns but never thank the tree, or the Lord who made it grow. We must not receive the dew and yet never think of the Heaven from which it comes. To be ungrateful is to be unmanly—to be ungrateful to God is to commit high treason against the majesty of His goodness. I think that an hour would be well spent, by any person here, in sitting quietly and going over his autobiography. Turn over the pages of your diary—if you have none written, turn over the pages of your memory—and think of all that God has done for you from the day when you hung upon your mother's breast until the present moment—

"Streams of mercy, never ceasing,

Call for songs of loudest praise." But God does not hear the songs of praise because we let the streams of mercy glide by unnoticed. Far too often, we—

"Let His mercies lie

Forgotten in unthankfulness,

And without praises die."

We do not even put a tombstone over their graves, but let them lie as dead things, uncared for, forgotten, out of mind.

If there is any time when it is unlikely for us to think of God's mercies, but when it would be especially wise for us to do so. If there is one time more unlikely than another, it is when we are in great trouble. Here is poor Job, covered with sore boils, sitting on a dunghill, scraping himself with a bit of a broken pot. His children are dead. His property destroyed and even his wife not giving him a word of comfort—and his friends acting in a most unfriendly manner. Now it is that he talks to his God and says, "You have granted me life and favor, and Your visitation has preserved my spirit." You are very ill—think of the time when you were well. You are poor—remember when you washed your feet in milk and your steps with butter—and had more than heart could wish. Friends have forsaken you—remember when you had plenty of friends.

"Oh!" you say, "that will be rubbing salt into the wound." No, no, I trust not. You will remember that you were not always unhappy, that you were not always full of pain. God has spared your life and given you many favors. If you do not feel that you can bless Him for the present moment, yet forget not to bless Him for the past. And when you once begin to do that, you will soon find that your praise will overlap the past and cover the present—if it does not even run into the future! Only begin to praise God and you will find that he who praises God for mercy will never be long without a mercy for which to praise Him! I therefore invite those of you who are sad, tonight, to think of God's past goodness and, as I trust that the larger proportion here will not be found in that condition, I urge you to lead the way in taking a happy retrospect, tonight, of all that God has done for you in Providence and Grace.

Job gives us, here, a charter with three blessings in it—"You have granted me life and favor, and Your visitation has preserved my spirit." These are choice favors! As we dwell upon them, may our hearts gratefully bless God for all that He has done for us!

I. The first blessing of this heavenly charter is LIFE—"You have granted me life."

Well, I think that we ought to thank God that we have lived at all. I know the pessimist version of the psalm of life is that, "'Tis something better not to be." Perhaps it would have been something better if that gentleman had not been—

better, I should think, for his wife and family if they had not had to live with such a miserable creature! But the most of us thank God for our being, as well as for our well-being. We count it something not to be stones, or plants, or "dumb, driven cattle." We are thankful to be intelligent beings with powers of thought and capable of mental and spiritual enjoyment. Truly, O Lord, it is no small thing to be, even to be a man, for what is man? Well, with all his sin, yet as You did make him, when he had no sin, he was but a little lower than the angels and You did make him to have dominion over all the works of Your hands. You have made him immortal! You have made him a king! You have crowned him with glory and honor and if he does but know his destiny, and works it out aright, You have made him to be glorified with Yourself—You have made him to stand even higher than the angels, now that You have redeemed him, for he has tasted of a love which unfallen angels could not know!

If you choose to make your being to be your eternal curse, why, you must do it, I suppose—but not without our tears. But if you are rational beings, and use your reason reasonably, you will thank God that you live and pray that your life may always be a blessing to you.

But we also thank God that we have lived on in spite of many perils. There are some here who ought very much to thank God that they live on after the perils through which they have passed. It was something to find ourselves alive after the terrible thunderstorm of the week before last. It is something to be alive after an earthquake, or a tremendous storm at sea, or to be alive in the midst of a pestilence, or alive after a battle, to be alive after some fearful accident—to be alive, I say, when there are so many gates to the grave—

"The rising morning can't assure

That we shall end the day,

For death stands ready at the door

To take our lives away."

And yet, despite all these things, we are still here! Some of you, not long ago, were very ill. It was thought that you would die—you thought so yourself, you were brought very low—and yet here you are! While others have died, you are still spared. You went hard by the gates of death and seemed to look into eternity for a while, but you were allowed to pass on and you are yet among the living, to praise God, as I hope you are doing this very day!

Yes, it is God's Grace that has granted us life. I find that, in the Hebrew, it reads, "lives," as if we had several lives, as though, if we had not had many lives, we should not have had any life at this moment. But life upon life has come to us, like wave upon wave at sea and, whereas one might have washed us on the shore of death, another has carried us back to the sea of life, again, and still we live!

I am addressing some from whom our text asks for gratitude because they are alive notwithstanding constitutional weakness. Perhaps from a child you were always feeble. Oftentimes you have asked yourself, "How is it that I have lived? Strong and hearty men and women have died before me and I, who have always been ailing, find that the creaking door hangs long on its hinges." Well, do not creak more than you can help, but bless God that you are not taken off the hinges! It is really very marvelous how some live, even, to old age when every day they seem to be on the very verge of departure. We account for their continued life by this fact, that they can say with Job, "You have granted me life." Let us praise God, then, even if we can only do it with a feeble tongue, for it is something, to still live.

And I am speaking to a great many here to whom this text should commend itself because they have lived so long. I suppose that, in no other place in London, or perhaps in the world, is there so large a number of old men and women gathered together as in this Tabernacle. One is often struck with the snow that lies about this place on the heads of so many. Do not blame us for getting old! We were all young, together, and I remember that many here were introduced into the Church as young men and young women. Nearly 40 years ago they said of me, "He takes into the Church a parcel of boys and girls." Well, they have been cured of that fault, if it was a fault, long ago! And now, perhaps, some will complain that they are old! We do not complain—we are so much nearer Heaven. But when I look upon some dear friends, here, who have passed even their four-score years, who have quite run out their lease and now are living upon sufferance, as I trust they may for years to come—and when I remember what a poor tottering fabric this tent-body of ours is, I am amazed that we still live on!—

"Our life contains a thousand springs,

And dies if one is gone.

Strange that a harp of thousand strings

Should keep in tune so long."

Yet it has kept in tune so long and we ought to bless God, tonight, those of us who are somewhere between 50 and a hundred, and others who are somewhere between 60 and 200 ought to bless God, tonight, that we have been spared so long, and say, in the language of the text, "You have granted me life and favor." You need not be frightened about that 200 that I mentioned—you will not, any of you, be likely to reach that figure! If any of us live for a century, we shall have done exceedingly well! We may thank God if we do not live as long as that, for, while it is well to live here, it is better for us, after all, before our infirmities multiply, to be up and away to our Father's house above!

Think of this a little longer, "You have granted me life." You have thought of the perils through which you have passed and the weaknesses that you have survived. Now think, beloved Friends, of the sin which might have provoked God to make an end of such a guilty life. Am I not speaking to some here who have lived without any thought of God, their Maker? Up till this time, God has fed you and preserved you in being, and yet you have not even given Him a thought! It is an amazing thing that He should have spared your life in the midst of such wicked ingratitude. Perhaps, my Friend—I hope it is not so—but perhaps you have been worse than this, and that mouth of yours has uttered blasphemies, and the members of your body have been given over to uncleanness. If you will look back, tonight, it will be a wonder to you, that you, perhaps professedly an atheist, possibly a drunk—you may be setting an evil example to wife and children and doing evil on all sides—but you have been spared!

One seems to say, "Cut down that upas tree, it drips with poison!" But God puts away the axe and He still spares you. Did you not, this very day, imprecate a curse upon yourself, and yet the curse has not come? There was a tract that used to be given away and which did much good. It was called, "The Swearer's Prayer." If every swearer would look upon his dreadful imprecation as a prayer, for such it is, he might well wonder that God has not, long ago, blasted him as he has said, like some oak of the forest that we have seen struck by lightning, standing there with its stag's-horn branches high in the air, a monument of what Divine Judgment can do! God has granted you life, yet nothing in that life has been pleasing to Him, or good for your fellow men. Thank Him that He has not yet cut you down as a cumberer of the ground!

But even if I speak to the best man and woman here, to those who have tried to be useful and are endeavoring to be holy, yet, dear Friends, what poor failures we are, after all! There is not one of us who can boast! We have to lay our hands upon our mouths and bow ourselves into the very dust. Truly, Lord, You have let us live, although we have done so little, and done that little so faultily. We can, tonight, praise You, and each one say, "You have granted me life."

I might thus continue to show you that our preservation in life is a theme for great gratitude—"You have granted me life." But if we can say this in a higher sense, "You have granted me life," spiritual life, how much greater should our gratitude be! I could not even feel the guilt of sin, I was so dead, but You have granted me life to repent. I could not look to Jesus as my Savior and find rest in Him, but You have granted me life to believe in Him. Oh, what a mercy it is to have spiritual life! I do not like to ask you whether you have it. I do not think that that ever ought to be a matter of question with anybody. A man is either alive or dead and he must know which he is—and however faint and feeble he may be, the very feeling of faintness and feebleness is a sign of life—for the dead man does not even feel that!

If, tonight, you have only life enough with which to groan, to weep and to cry to God, thank God for it, and say, "You have granted me life." But if you have that little life, do not be satisfied with it. Pray to have life more abundantly, that you may come to joy and peace through believing, that you may have the full assurance of faith, that you may be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, that you may tread down sin and may serve the Lord in your day and generation, and bring hundreds and thousands to Christ! Pray that it may be so and then, as each single increase of power comes to you, sing, in the words of the Patriarch, "You have granted me life." Oh, for more life! Do you feel dull and dead tonight? Cry to God to grant you life! Cry for Divine Grace and then, when it comes, gratefully say, "You have granted me life."

II. The second blessing of this heavenly charter is DIVINE FAVOR—"You have granted me life and favor."

Have you ever thought of the many favors that God has bestowed upon you, even upon some of you who, as yet, have never tasted of His Grace? What a favor it is to many to be sound in body! Dear friends are here tonight who have not seen the light of the sun for many a day. God is gracious to them in their blindness, but do you not think that we ought to praise Him for our eyesight? There are many beloved Christian friends who used to sit on this lower platform and around here, for although they were deaf, they could hear my voice in the preaching of the Gospel. But with great sorrow

they have come to me, one by one, and said, "I cannot even hear with the trumpet now, I am getting so deaf." Bless God for your ears, if you still have the use of them—and take heed how you hear! Why, there is not a single faculty that God has given but what we ought to be thankful for it! When you see around you these who are crippled, those who are deprived of one limb or one sense, should you not say, "You have granted me life and favor"? They have favors, too, for which to thank God, but you have this particular favor which is denied to them. Do not fail to thank the Lord for it.

It is a great mercy to have been born of good and honest parents and not to be the inheritors of disease, as some are who are born to a life of sorrow by no fault of their own. Be grateful for your ancestry, young man, if you have sprung of good sound stock, and say, "You have granted me life and favor." Do not go and give that body to the devil, I beseech you! Do not go and plunge yourself into vice and sin if God has restrained your ancestors from evil. By His Grace, may you also be kept back and enabled to say, "You have granted me life and favor, and I cannot sin against Your favor"!

I cannot help reminding you, here, of the great favor of God in the matter of soundness of mind. There is a dear friend who has gladly heard the preaching of the Gospel, here, but now he has to be confined in an asylum, for it would be dangerous to have him at liberty. There is another and we often meet with such, who seemed as cheerful and happy as any of us, but he has now sunk into deep despondency. I have often prayed God to let me go anywhere sooner than into an asylum. It seems so dreadful to lose one's reason. Be grateful that you have your senses. Surely you must already be lunatics if you do not bless God that you are not lunatics! There must be a madness in your heart if you do not thank Him for sparing you from so terrible a trial. These favors are looked upon as very common things—a sound mind and a sound body—but if they were universal, they would still be mercies for which we ought specially to bless the name of the Lord.

I speak to many here to whom God has also given a comfortable lot in life. You work and you work pretty hard, but still, you are not starved and you are not ground to death by forced labor. There are many in this House of Prayer who ought to be very grateful for the easy circumstances in which they are found. Why

am I talking about these things? Why, because I want, by stirring you up to gratitude, to bind you with cords of thankfulness to God! Will you not thank Him who has done so much as this for you? If you were suddenly brought into the deepest poverty and the most painful sickness, and did not know where to lay your heads, you would then reproach yourselves to think that when your lives were cast in pleasant places, and you had a goodly heritage, you were not more grateful and more obedient to the God of Love.

Some here, too, some few, at any rate, have been favored with much prosperity. O self-made men, do not begin to adore yourselves because you made yourselves, for if you made yourselves, you are poor sticks, I know! I would not trust myself to make myself, I would make an awful mess of myself. No, thank God for your prosperity and devote your wealth to His service, who granted it to you. Grow not purse-proud! Be not exalted above measure among your fellow men! The more you have, the more you owe to God—therefore be humble and be devoted to Him who has treated you with so much favor.

And I may say, tonight, that in this congregation, God has given you the favor of hearing the Gospel—no mean favor, let me remind you. Multitudes, multitudes, multitudes are without it, perishing for lack of knowledge! And there are some who once heard the Gospel who are now far removed from the sound of it. Friends who once used to join in our great assembly are now far away in those parts of South America where as yet there is no Gospel teaching, or they are far away in the backwoods of America or Canada, or away in the bush in Australia, where, as yet, the Message of Mercy is not, at any rate, regularly brought to them, and they very much miss the means of Grace. Be thankful that you have the Gospel at almost every street corner and, if you are willing to hear it, you may hear it.

Still, putting all these things together, they do not come up to this last point, that many of us have received the favors of saving Grace—"You have granted me life and favor." The highest favors of all, God has given to some of us—the favor of being chosen to be His from before the foundation of the world, the favor of being redeemed from among men, the favor of being called out by His effectual Grace, the favor of being renewed in the spirit of our minds, the favor of justification whereby we are made accepted in the Beloved—the favor of full, free, irreversible pardon, whereby our sin is blotted out forever, the favor of a Throne of Grace, the favor of answered prayer, the favor of Divine Providence which makes all things work together for our good, the favor of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit who is with us, and shall abide in us forever!

I cannot run over the list of God's favors to His people, for it is too long. Only praise your God, each one of you, as you say tonight, "You have granted me life and favor." Happy people, thrice-happy people, of whom this is true! If we did not praise the Lord, the stones in the street might well cry out against us.

III. The last blessing of the charter, upon which I shall be a little longer, is DIVINE VISITATION—"Your visitation has preserved my spirit." Does God ever come to man? Does He not? Yes, but it is a great wonder—"What is man, that You are mindful of him? And the son of man that You visit him?"

May I remind some of you of how much you ought to praise God for His visitation? He visited you, first, with an awakening and conviction of sin. I remember when His Spirit came to me while I was yet a child, and made me feel a heavy burden on account of my childish sins. How I wept and cried, when alone, because I had been so guilty before God! And as a youth, that feeling still pursued me wherever I went. God visited me in the night, visited me often in the morning, when I woke up before anybody else, to read Baxter's, "Call to the Unconverted," and Alleine's, "Alarm," and suchlike books, over which I pored again and again, feeling the evil of my sin and having the sword of the Spirit piercing yet more deeply into my

conscience at every page I read! I thank God for those early visitations! If any of you are having them now, quench not the Spirit of God! Be glad to know your real state as sinners while you are yet young. The visitations of God, in the form of conviction, if at first they bring us under bondage, are, nevertheless of the utmost value, for by these He preserves our spirit.

After that first experience, there came visitations of enlightenment and conversion. Can you remember when Jesus first visited you and brought you up out of the horrible pit, and out of the miry clay? Does not your heart leap within you, even now, as you are ready to sing—

"Happy day! Happy day! When Jesus washed my sins away"? Yes, God's visitations, by revealing Christ to your broken heart, preserved your spirit!

Perhaps since then you have had visitations of another kind. You have had chastisement, or you have had affliction in the house. God's visitations are sometimes very unwelcome. We dread that He should come to afflict or chastise us and yet, in looking back upon all such experiences, I think that you can say, "Your visitation has preserved my spirit." I saw a young Sister, just before this service, and I said to her, "When did you find the Lord?" She replied, "It was when I was very ill." Yes, it is often so—God makes us ill in body that we may have time to think of Him, and turn to Him. "Your visitation has preserved my spirit." What would become of some people if they were always in good health, or if they were always prospering? Tribulation is the black dog that goes after the stray sheep and barks them back to the Good Shepherd! I thank God that there are such things as the visitations of correction and of holy discipline to preserve our spirit and bring us to Christ.

But then, dear Friends, we have had other visitations, visitations of revival and restoration. Do you not sometimes get very dull and dead? Then you are glad to go and hear a sermon, or read some godly, soul-stirring book, or meet with some Christian friend, and you say afterwards, "Well, I do not know how it is, but I seem quite different from what I was. I have made a new departure, I have started off again." I think that some of our friends have need to do that, tonight—it will not hurt any of us if we all seem to begin again, tonight, and take Jesus Christ into our heart once more, and let Him come as He came at the first, and be like a new Christ to us! Let us joy and rejoice in Him with our first love and our early delights. Lord, give us that visitation, tonight, and revive our spirits! Oh, what visitations of joy He sometimes gives us when He comes very near to us! We do not hardly know how to bear it! We cry when the vessel gets quite full, "Hold, Lord, I cannot bear more of Your joy." "Ah!" you say, "we do not know much about that experience." Do you not? Then pray the Lord to visit you often, that you may know more about it!

The best of all is when the Lord visits us and never goes away, but stays with us always, so that we walk in the light of His Countenance, and go from strength to strength, always singing, "Your visitation never ended, daily continued, preserves my spirit." You have all heard the phrase, generally used by juries at a coroner's inquest when a man has died suddenly, "Died by the visitation of God." No doubt some do thus die, but I want you to live by the visitation of God! That is a very different thing and that is the only way in which we truly can live—by God's visiting us from day to day—preserving our spirit from the dangers that surround us. Live, then, by the visitation of God!

You are sick, my Friend. Your heart is sick. Sin, like a grievous disease, is destroying you. The cancer of an evil habit is eating into your very vitals. What is to be done with you? Nothing but that Jesus Christ the Lord should come and give you a gracious visitation, come and look you in the face and feel your pulse, and lay His hand on your heart, and change it, and make you a new creature! And He will do all that if you

send for Him. Doctors have a night bell, you know, and a night-tube, by which they may be called in cases of urgency. Now ring God's night bell at once, and speak up that tube of prayer, "Lord, I am sick unto death! Come and heal me. Come and heal me!" Will not somebody in these pews, now, without the use of a word, yet say in the silence of his heart, "Lord, I am sorely vexed; I am sick unto death with sin; come and heal me"? And Jesus Christ will say, "I will come and heal you." Then will you say, "Your visitation has preserved my spirit."

You know how a farm will sometimes get smothered with weeds and things seem to go all wrong. What is the matter? On enquiry, you find that the farmer has been out on the Continent, he has been away from his farm. Well, then, of course the farm goes wrong! But have him back, again, and the farmer's eye does more than his hand—his foot manures the ground wherever he stands—and things soon get on better. Now, if the farm of your nature has fallen into a bad state, you need the Husbandman back. You need the Lord Jesus to come and survey the estate and give directions as to what is to be done to it. He will soon set the whole place right! Yes, if your farm has become like a desert, bare as the palm of your hand, He can come and turn it to fertility—He can make the wilderness like Eden, and the desert like the Garden of the Lord. A visitation from the Lord Jesus Christ is what we all need when we are barren and dead.

May we expect it? Yes, He came on a visit here, once. We did not see Him when He came, but there were some who saw Him. You remember how George Herbert quaintly sings of His laying aside His azure mantle and making the sky with it? And taking off His bright rings, and hanging them up as stars?—

"He did descend, undressing all the way And when they asked what He would wear, He smiled, and said as He did come, He had new clothes a-making here below." And poor clothes they were, when He was born of the Virgin and lived in our inferior clay! He paid us a visit, but men did not let Him lodge comfortably. There was no room for Him in the inn. It was a sorry entertainment that they gave Him, for they pierced His side before He went away, and He carried with Him the marks in His hands and feet that He had received in the house of His friends. Well, but still, having once come, and died on this earth, He knows the way— and as He cannot die again, He will come again—and now, tonight, in spirit, by His Spirit, He will come to you, if you only cry to Him, "Come." If you cry to Him, "Come," tonight, that will be only the echo of what He says, "Come unto Me, all you that labor and are heavy laden." He cries, "Come," catch up that word, and say, "Come." Echo His, "Come," by your own, "Come"—and you two will meet before the service is over, though we have reached the last few minutes of it. May your, "Come," and Christ's, "Come," blend in one! Come, Lord Jesus, even so, come quickly, and set Your poor servants free from the taint of sin, and from the dread of the wrath of God!

Yes, you need a visitation from Him who has already come and, beside that, He has sent His Holy Spirit to abide until He, Himself, descends from Heaven with a shout. The Holy Spirit is here in this assembly right now—plead and cry to Him for His visitation!

And if my Lord will come anywhere, tonight, it is to you who think yourselves unfit for Him to come to you! To you who would give your eyes to have Him, but scarcely dare to hope that He will ever come to you! The Lord says, "To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My Word." Do you not belong to that kind of people, trembling at God's Word, wishing only that you dared to hope in His mercy? Come, now, and cast yourselves on Jesus! Come, now, and trust yourselves with the great Savior who has ascended on high to give repentance and remission of sins, and who is ready to give both the repentance and the remission to every soul that is willing to have them! If you would have them, they are yours! Believe for eternal life. Believe now!

The Lord grant you such a visitation that you may be constrained to believe, for Jesus' sake! Amen and Amen.

EXPOSITIONS BY C. H. SPURGEON. PSALMS 6, 8.

Psalm 6: Here the Psalmist asks for a visit from God, for he is sick at heart, heavy and depressed. Be very thankful if that is not your case, but if it is, be very grateful that here is a prayer ready-made for you. Here you are taught how to cry to God and what to expect from Him. If you are very sick and sad, you are not worse off than David was. Send for David's Physician—you cannot have a better doctor than the royal Physician! He who waited on King David is prepared to wait on you.

1. O LORD, rebuke me not in Your anger. "Rebuke me. It will do me good. I need it, Lord, but not in anger! Be gentle and tender with me—'Rebuke me not in Your anger.'"

1. Neither chasten me in Your hot displeasure. "Chasten me. It may be that the rod will be very curative to me, but let not the chastening be given in Your hot displeasure. Be not very angry with Your poor sinful servant. If You do not turn away Your rod, yet turn away Your wrath. It is a sweet prayer. Some people cry to God about their sickness. It is much better to cry to God about the cause of it—that is to say if it is a chastisement for sin, get rid of the sin—and the rod will then be removed.

2. Have mercy upon me, O LORD; for I am weak: O LORD, heal me; for my bones are vexed. "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak." This was a sweet reason for David to urge—"For I am weak." He could not say, "For I am worthy." He would not have dared to say that. He could not say that when he said, "Have mercy," for mercy is for the unworthy. Justice is for the good! MERCY is for those who are guilty! "Have mercy upon me, O Lord, for I am weak: O Lord, heal me; for my bones are vexed." Plead the greatness of your disease as a reason for the remedy. Do not come with your self-righteousness—that will hinder you. Come with your sorrow and your sin, your weakness and your pain, and plead these before God.

3. My soul is also sorely vexed. That is worse than the bones being vexed. "The spirit of a man will sustain his infirmity, but a wounded spirit who can bear?"

3. But You, O LORD, how long? There is the pith of the prayer. David is troubled because God is away from him. He has lost communion with his Lord. He has gotten out of fellowship with his God and here comes the most necessary cry of

all—

4. Return, O LORD, deliver my soul: oh save me for Your mercies' sake. Will not that prayer suit you who are here, tonight, you who are full of sin and are heart-broken about it, and dread the wrath to come? I put this prayer into your mouths and pray the Holy Spirit to put it into your hearts—"Oh save me for Your mercies' sake."

5. For in death there is no remembrance of You: in the grave who shall give You thanks? As much as to say, "If You let me die, You will lose one singer out of Your earthly choir. But if You will let me live, I will remember You—I will praise You; I will give You thanks." Do you feel like saying, tonight, "Lord, if You shall destroy me, You will gain nothing by it. But if You will save me, there will be one who will give You thanks forever"? I have told you, sometimes, of that old woman who said, "If the Lord saves me, He shall never hear the last of it." And you and I can also say that if He saves us, He shall never hear the last of

it—we will praise Him throughout eternity for His great salvation!

6. I am weary with my groaning; all the night make I my bed to swim; I water my couch with my tears. David was in a very sorry case when he wrote these words. So great was his pain, so acute his sorrow that all the sluices of his eyes were pulled up and he seemed to float his bed in tears and to be like George Herbert when he wrote—

"O who will give me tears?

Come, all you springs,

Dwell in my head and eyes!

Come, clouds and rain—

My grief has need of all the watery things,

That Nature has produced!

Let every vein suck up a river to supply my eyes,

My weary, weeping eyes, too dry for me,

Unless they get new conduits, new supplies,

To bear them out and with my state agree."

7. My eyes are consumed because of grief. He had almost wept his eyes out—they grew red with his weeping, so that he could not see.

7. It waxes old because of all my enemies. His eyesight grew dim, like that of an old man. A cataract of grief had put a cataract of blindness into his eyes.

8. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. He needs his God to come to him, so he bids God's enemies clear out. If we keep company with the wicked, we cannot invite God to our house and expect Him to come. "Depart from me," says David, "all you workers of iniquity." "You who are singing what you call a jolly song, be off with you! You who are merry with your jokes against religion, be gone far from me."

8. For the LORD has heard the voice of my weeping. "And if He has heard my tears, I do not need you to be here. I cannot associate with God's enemies, now that He has heard the voice of my weeping." Is not that a beautiful expression, "The voice of my weeping"? Why, there was no sound, was there? Yet there are songs without words and there are voices without sounds.

9. The LORD has heard my supplication; the LORD will receive my prayer. "I thought at first that He would not take my petition; but I see He stretches out His right hand. He receives my prayer—and if He receives my prayer, I shall soon receive His answer."

10. Let all my enemies be ashamed and sorely vexed: let them return and be suddenly ashamed. Now let us read the Eighth Psalm in which David expresses great wonder that God, whom he had asked to visit him, should deign to do so. I think I see him sitting with his window open. It is night and he is feeling better—and he bids them throw open the window and he sits and looks at the stars, glad of the cool, fresh

air.

Psalm 8:1. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! Who has set Your Glory above the heavens? They are very high, but Your Glory is higher than the heavens.

2-4. Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings have You ordained strength because of Your enemies, that You might still the enemy and the avenger. When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; what is man, that You are mindful of Him? And the son of man, that You visit him? He, whose voice rolls the stars along, who makes those bright worlds to fly like sparks from the anvil of His Omnipotence, how can He stoop so low as to regard His fallen creature, man, who is so small, so insignificant?

5, 6. For You have made him a little lower than the angels, and have crowned him with glory and honor. You made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet. Man is God's viceroy. He reigns over God's works in God's name. Let him not set up to be a king and try to usurp the honor of his great Lord, the Emperor, the Universal Governor!

7, 8. All sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea, and whatever passes through the paths of the seas. What a king, man is! Let him not be cruel to the beasts of the field; let him not be a tyrant; God did not make him for that purpose. Let his reign be generous and kind—and if the animals must suffer, yet spare them as much suffering as possible. O man, be you a generous viceroy, for you are under a most generous King who is, Himself, the happy God and who delights in the happiness of all His creatures!

9. O LORD our Lord, how excellent is Your name in all the earth! Thus does the Psalmist finish as he began the Psalm, by praising the name of the Lord.

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